

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 01859 242140Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 316

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 1859

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR ISHAM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR HA

SUBJ: THIRD-COUNTRY ISSUES

REF: STATE 172095

1. FOLLOWING ARE MY THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL.

2. FEW THIRD-COUNTRY ISSUES WILL HAVE MAJOR IMPACT ON OUR RELATIONS WITH HAITI FOR THE BASIC REASON THAT THIS LEADERSHIP, UNDER THE YOUNG AND PRAGMATIC JEAN CLAUDE DUVALIER, VALUES ITS FREEDOM OF MANEUVER, RECOGNIZES IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING A FRIENDLY BUT DIGNIFIED RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S., AND SEES LITTLE CONGRUENCE BETWEEN HAITI'S INTERESTS AND CURRENT SET OF LATIN AMERICAN CONCERNS. DUVALIER HAS WORKED OUT A "BALANCING" POLICY WHICH HE BELIEVES HAS BROUGHT HAITI SOLID GAINS, UNDERSCORING BOTH HAITI'S INDEPENDENCE FROM U.S. AND ITS DESIRE TO ASSOCIATE, ON TERM OF RECIPROCITY, WITH CARIBBEAN NEIGHBORS.

3. DISMANTLING OAS SANCTIONS WOULD CAUSE NO SHOCK TO OUR RELATIONS HERE SINCE HAITI HAS PREPARED ITS OWN POLICY EVOLUTION CAREFULLY (NEGATIVE VOTE; ABSENTION; PROSPECTIVE VOTE FOR FREEDOM OF ACTION RESOLUTION). HAITIANS HAVE SOUGHT TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN RATIONALE FOR MORE BENIGN POSTURE TOWARD AN IDEOLOGICAL ANTAGONIST. THUS AUTHORITARIAN LE NOUVEAU MONDE JULY 24 STRIKES TOLERANT NOTE TOWARD CUBA AND SUGGESTS HAITI CAN WELCOME "PRODIGAL SON" MORE
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PAGE 02 PORT A 01859 242140Z

READILY THAN OTHERS BECAUSE SHE NEVER FANNED FLAMES DURING

PERIOD OF CONFLICT. AT SAME TIME, SENIOR OFFICIALS PRIVATELY PREDICT THAT ONCE NEWLY ESTABLISHED CUBAN MISSION START SPREADING PROPAGANDA AND SUPPORTING SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENTS, AS THEY INEVITABLY WOULD, THEN GOVERNMENTS WHO ADVOCATED REMOVAL OF SANCTIONS WILL HAVE RUDE AWAKENING. HAITI ITSELF, IN ANY EVENT, CONTEMPLATES NO RESUMPTION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH CUBA.

4. RECIPROCAL MOVES BETWEEN U.S. AND CUBA OF KIND CITED REFTTEL WOULD CAUSE NEITHER SURPRISE NOR CONCERN HERE, BUT WOULD ON CONTRARY BE SEEN AS LOGICAL EXTENSION OF MORE REALISTIC U.S. POLICY WHICH RECOGNIZES DIVISIVE EFFECT OF CUBAN SANCTIONS ON HEMISPHERIC RELATIONS AND STERILITY OF EFFORTS TO ISOLATE CASTRO REGIME. HAITIANS HAVE BECOME USED TO SEEING U.S. DEAL WITH COMMUNIST STATES OF FAR GREATER POWER THAN CUBA POSSESSES, AND THEY WOULD VIEW SUCH MOVES WITHIN DETENTE CONTEXT. THEY WOULD, NEVERTHELESS, WATCH FOR SIGNS EITHER THAT U.S. WAS ADOPTING A COLONIALIST TONE (WHICH WOULD TOUCH SENSITIVE NERVE HERE, WHATEVER HAITIANS MIGHT THINK OF CASTRO) OR THAT CASTRO WAS SUCCEEDING IN HUMILIATING U.S. (WHICH MIGHT TEMPT THEM TO BELIEVE THEY COULD TRY MORE ASSERTIVE LINE THEMSELVES).

4. HAITI WOULD UNRESERVEDLY WELCOME A NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY AND HAS FOLLOWED SYMPATHETICALLY USG EFFORTS TO REACH ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE SOLUTION.

5. BREAKDOWN IN TREATY NEGOTIATIONS WOULD WORRY HAITIANS ABOUT CONSEQUENCES FOR REGIONAL SECURITY AND EFFECT ON PANAMANIAN EXTREMISTS TEMPTED TO RESORT TO VIOLENT TACTICS AND SABOTAGE. IF U.S. CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION WERE CAUSE OF BREAKDOWN, HAITIAN COMMENT WOULD BE ASTRINGENT.

6. FAILURE TO GET OPEC EXCLUSION FROM GSP IN TRA REMOVED WOULD BE DISAPPOINTING, BUT WOULD HAVE ONLY MARGINAL EFFECT ON RELATIONS, SINCE (A) U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO HAVE EXCLUSION REMOVED ARE WELL KNOWN, (B) NEITHER VENEZUELA NOR ECUADOR HAVE YET DONE MUCH FOR HAITI, ALTHOUGH VENEZUELA HAS MADE PROMISES
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PAGE 03 PORT A 01859 242140Z

ON ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.
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